



A Network of People  
Building Peace

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# GPPAC Strategic Plan 2016-2020

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Approved by GPPAC's International Steering Group  
on 19 May 2015 at the ISG meeting in The Hague



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## ABOUT GPPAC

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The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) is a member-led network of civil society organisations active in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding from around the world. Founded in 2003, our network consists of fifteen regional networks of local organisations; each region with its own priorities, character and agenda. GPPAC is large and diverse: we have members in almost all countries, ranging from activists to academics, from small, grassroots organisations to well-established regional networks. Together, we are working towards a fundamental shift in how the world deals with violent conflict: moving from reaction to prevention.

## ABOUT THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

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When GPPAC was formed, our initial goal was to develop a Global Action Agenda, a common vision of civil society organisations around the world on what must be done to further the prevention of violent conflict and build peace. Over a thousand peacebuilding organisations were involved in its drafting, and participated in a conference to launch it at the UN Headquarters in New York in 2005. The Global Action Agenda continues to underpin all our work, and this is the third GPPAC Strategic Plan we have developed based on it. This plan was developed through a collaborative approach in which all GPPAC regional networks participated, and its governing bodies, made up of regional representatives, had the lead in developing it.

## VISION AND MISSION

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**Vision: GPPAC seeks a world where violence and armed conflicts are prevented and resolved by peaceful means based on justice, gender equity, sustainable development and human security<sup>1</sup> for all.**

**Mission: GPPAC is a global network that links civil society with relevant local, national, regional and international actors and institutions to collectively contribute to a fundamental change in dealing with violence and armed conflicts: a shift from reaction to prevention.**

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<sup>1</sup> Human Security is defined as a people-centered approach to security, based on context specificity, local ownership, inclusiveness, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral engagement.

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

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Our guiding principles and values are written out in full in our Global Action Agenda, which remains the basis for our work and are included in GPPAC's charter.

**Achieving just peace by peaceful means:** GPPAC takes a proactive, nonviolent approach to peaceful engagement in emerging tensions and crises. Our initiatives should contribute to achieving justice, including restorative, distributive, gender, social and environmental justice.

**Primacy of local participation and ownership:** Peace processes must be owned by the people affected by conflict, and not be externally imposed. GPPAC and other actors' contributions should build on existing capacities and never duplicate or displace local initiatives.

**Diversity, inclusiveness and equality:** We recognise the value and strength inherent in diversity and pluralism, and that women's equality is a cornerstone for sustainable peace and justice. We work to create inclusive, diverse and vibrant civil societies. We aim for the empowerment of all those who experience marginalisation, and seek to strengthen inclusive societal processes for democratisation and equality.

**Multilateralism:** Human security can only be achieved on the basis of a truly cooperative endeavour. We believe that CSOs have an important role to play in an expanded conception of multilateralism, and aim to strengthen their role in global and regional organisations.

**Sustainability:** We commit to the long-standing goal of transforming the conditions that give rise to violent conflict. Our strategies should help to foster social change that addresses structural and relationship challenges generating systemic conflict and to move toward a desired future.

**Dialogue:** We promote dialogue as a principal method to respond to conflict and prevent violence at all levels of society, especially when it engages all parties.

**Accountability:** As the influence of CSOs grows, so does our obligation to be accountable, especially to the communities in which we work. We recognise the importance of developing norms at all levels and within all institutional settings.

**Transparency:** We are committed to working transparently. If we have specific interests or allegiances, we will declare them and acknowledge how they affect our priorities and approaches.

**Learning from practice:** We aim to be reflective practitioners: aware of our role, mandate and contribution at every stage. Evaluation and strategic learning, as well as participatory, inclusive and just processes for planning and decision-making, are essential for improving conflict prevention practice and developing accountability.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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By Sharon Baghwan Rolls and Peter van Tuijl

Worldwide, 1.5 billion people live in fragile or conflict-affected states<sup>2</sup> and political and criminal violence are now the primary global cause of poverty. Conversely, poverty is also leading cause of violence, with many young people citing unemployment - followed by the social status and respect they feel they will gain - as their main reason for joining armed groups, creating a downward spiral of poverty and violence in vulnerable communities.<sup>3</sup>

Violent conflict destroys lives, assets, infrastructure, ecosystems and social and economic capacities. It disrupts communities, leaving traumatised victims in situations requiring long-term, high investments to support reconstruction and rehabilitation. The global economic cost of violence in 2013 was estimated at US\$9.8 trillion, which represents 11.3% of Gross World Product.<sup>4</sup>

Measuring the cost of violent conflict often involves analysing human rights violations and the resulting mortality, injury, displacement or disability rates. However, neither the value of human life, nor human suffering can be quantified in any meaningful way. From the outset, **we take the normative position that the costs of violent conflict from a human perspective are simply unacceptable.**

We believe that violence is not an unstoppable force of nature, nor the only possible outcome of serious disputes between groups: it can often be predicted, sometimes long before it breaks out, and steps can be taken to prevent it.

There is no lack of international agreements, official statements, reports and commitments pledging support for the principle of conflict prevention. However, we see a lack of institutional capacity and political will to support long-term preventive strategies. Too often, attention only comes once violence has broken out. And while everyone speaks for local ownership, this principle is notoriously difficult to translate into meaningful practice, and the voices of those affected and threatened by conflict often remain unheard in national, global and regional policy processes. We want to change that.

GPPAC has come a long way in eleven years: What began as a shared idea of a few organisations working in conflict prevention and peacebuilding has grown into a robust network, led and owned by its members. We have built mutual trust and solidarity, and a feeling of a shared identity for many in the network. Our membership has a huge diversity and range of expertise, and a willingness to share it. We are strong in gender equity within, and gender advocacy towards those we seek to influence. We are building a name for ourselves in policy circles, and have created relationships and space for engagement with governments and intergovernmental organisations. We have demonstrated our strength in facilitating track two dialogue processes and interacting with governments not necessarily open to engagement. GPPAC members around the world are active in community mediation and work with vulnerable communities to ensure that their voices are heard and their needs met in peace processes.

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<sup>2</sup> WB World Development Report 2014, p. 146

<sup>3</sup> WB World development report 2011, p.9

<sup>4</sup> The economic cost of violence containment, 2014 Institute for Economics and Peace.

But we are not where we want to be yet: within our network, we want to build stronger connections from the local, to the regional, to the global and vice versa. Our spread is uneven in places: some members are extremely active in the network, others much less so, which can raise the question of how representative and therefore legitimate we are in areas where members engage less. We must work to ensure a better flow of knowledge and lessons throughout the network, making sure that all members can benefit from them. To be more effective, we must accept that we cannot do everything, and focus on those issues where we can truly make a difference.

We also face external challenges: by its nature, the field in which we work is complex and unpredictable, situations and the actors involved can change rapidly. The political will to prevent is often lacking. In recent years, we have encountered both shrinking budgets and shrinking space for civil society to operate. Furthermore, some actors actively pursue the opposite of our aims: There are armed groups with no interest in peaceful resolution of the conflicts they are involved in, and actors who seek political gain by sowing division in their own societies. There are factors that lie outside of our scope of influence, such as global climate change, that will cause and exacerbate conflicts and affect human security in the years to come.

However, there are also some causes for optimism: At the global policy level, the support for preventive action is growing, most recently in UN Security Council Resolution 2171 on conflict prevention, but also in the Responsibility to Protect norm, UN General Assembly Resolution 66 /290 on Human Security, and in growing interest in infrastructures for peace. We can use these commitments to remind decision makers of their responsibility to act on prevention. As civil society, we can offer our insights on how to implement them, strengthened by the increasing recognition of the importance of locally owned and inclusive peacebuilding processes.

More and more countries are developing national action plans for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. We will continue to remind them of the role of women not only as victims, but as agents and key partners in prevention and peacebuilding. Finally, at the time of writing, there is a likelihood that there will be a standalone goal on peace and security in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, which promises a renewed focus of capacities and resources in this area. We may yet see a real shift from reaction to prevention in the years to come.

## 2 WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

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In the 2011-2015 strategic period, we worked through four strategies - Action Learning, Policy and Advocacy, Public Outreach, and Network Strengthening - addressing four main themes: Peace Education, Dialogue and Mediation, Human Security and Preventive Action. Reflecting on this period, we can affirm that our strength lies in the diversity and reach of our global network, and this is where we can be most effective. GPPAC members include civil society organisations working at different levels - local, national, regional and global - and our added value lies in linking these levels to enable members to complement each other. This can contribute to better coordinated, inclusive and coherent approaches to conflict prevention. In the strategic period 2016-2020 we will continue to work along the four strategies and addressing the four themes, but we will not take them as starting points for our programmes.

As a learning network, we invested in our action learning strategy to generate knowledge, document experiences of conflict prevention in practice, and develop practical guidance to share our collective experience and strengthen the field as a whole. We are increasingly approached by partners across the world as a source of expertise and a point of access to local civil society practitioners. These are examples of approaches that have proven to be effective, and which we will build upon in the years to come:

**Learning and improving practices:** We collect the wide range of expertise of our members into best practice guides, such as our Conflict Analysis Field Manual. It serves to support and can provide guidance to members' conflict analysis capacities, but also contributes to our advocacy work: it is being used to train OSCE conflict analysts, and thus improve their prevention practice. We also learn constantly from one another, both through cross-regional exchanges and by undertaking joint action. Working together benefits us all, and helps to further the field of conflict prevention. In addition to learning from practice, we continuously evaluate our own work, using the outcome mapping approach, and adapt accordingly.

**Voices from the ground:** Too often, the voices of the people caught in the middle of conflicts, and those of the CSOs that work in their communities, go unheard. In the public domain, and at all levels of decision making. We have worked within GPPAC to change that, by bringing practitioners to different policy arenas, where GPPAC is becoming known for the valuable knowledge and expertise of its members, but also through campaigns such as Human Security First in which the stories of those affected by conflict are shared and analysed to contribute to inclusive conflict prevention strategies.

**The collaborative approach:** Multi-stakeholder strategies, where diverse actors work together to prevent violence, are crucial. In the Western Balkans and in Eastern Europe for instance, GPPAC members have been working with Ministries of Education to accredit and roll out peace education modules in schools. Globally, GPPAC has been working towards more meaningful and structured relationships between civil society, regional organisations and the UN, to help create an effective global peacebuilding architecture and the delivery of human security as a global public good. GPPAC has supported greater access for members to regional organisations, and contributed to increasing recognition of the role of civil society in this regard.

**Engagement:** From the outset, GPPAC's approach to influencing decision makers and conflict dynamics has been through engagement strategies. GPPAC Northeast Asia, for instance, has worked for many years to build relationships with counterparts in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and between

its members from across a region fraught with inter-state tensions. GPPAC Northeast Asia is currently the only forum in which civil society representatives from every country and territory in the region can meet. While we will remind decision makers of their commitments and hold them to account, we do not exclude any party from the conversation on seeking peaceful resolutions to conflict. In recent years we engage the security sector in our promotion for a human security approach to peace building.

**Gender mainstreaming:** Gender equality is a cornerstone for sustainable peace and justice, and a gender perspective enhances conflict prevention approaches. GPPAC integrates gender-sensitive peacebuilding throughout its work, and links civil society actors working on gender around the world to exchange experiences. We provide a platform to strengthen their capacities and connect local experiences to regional and global levels. We have carved out a niche in emphasizing the role of women as positive agents of change in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. By taking a gender perspective, we work to counter predominant narratives of women as solely victims of violence in conflicts, and men as solely perpetrators of violence.

**Dialogue and mediation:** Dialogue and mediation is at the core of GPPAC activities, employed as a conflict prevention instrument in various ways by members throughout the network. As a global network of civil society organisations, GPPAC has the capacity to provide neutral and safe spaces for civil society members to initiate and support politically sensitive dialogue processes that often require such neutral spaces. Dialogue is used to decrease tensions during conflict, or is applied as a reconciliation and confidence building tool in post-conflict contexts. In recent years, we have supported member-led track two dialogue processes between Georgia and Russia, between Cuba and the US, and in Northeast Asia. Members around the world also facilitate community dialogue processes, such as those in the Western Balkans, Ukraine, The Philippines and Zimbabwe, and their experiences can provide valuable lessons for others both within GPPAC and beyond.

### 3 FROM THEORIES OF CHANGE TO PRACTICAL APPROACHES: STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR 2016-2020

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Our goal is an ambitious one. A shift from reaction to prevention requires deep structural change at all levels of society. It is widely acknowledged that prevention is better. But the international community continues to invest millions in responding to crises after they erupt. Prioritising investment in prevention is not only cost effective, it can save many lives.

Our goal is ambitious, but not impossible. GPPAC is working to achieve it alongside a wide range of other actors, necessitating close connections and partnerships across our field of work and beyond.

#### 3.1 OUR THEORY OF CHANGE:

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As a global civil society network, we have the potential to work with and influence all conflict stakeholders, including affected communities; state and non-state actors; and intergovernmental organisations.

By doing this, we will contribute to improving and implementing locally grounded, inclusive mechanisms that create systemic and structural change to prevent violent conflict. We believe that by influencing and working with these different actors, together we will ensure conflicts are addressed and resolved by peaceful means, and violence is prevented.

To achieve this, we use three key approaches that draw from the full scope and diversity of our global network. Starting from the needs of our members, we work to **enable collaboration, improve practice and influence policy**. A people-centred approach to security underlines all that we do and we place the human security of people and communities at the heart of conflict prevention.

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding are highly complex and dynamic. We work in multifaceted, nonlinear contexts where pathways to long-term systemic change are diverse and can be unpredictable.<sup>5</sup> The nature of the violent conflicts we seek to address varies considerably:

- In scale: from local and urban violence, to intra- and inter-state conflicts;
- In underlying root causes: from socio-economic inequality to environmental degradation;
- In actors involved: modern conflicts involve a wide array of actors, state- and non-state, from the local to the global. All these actors must be involved in preventing and resolving conflicts for efforts to be successful.

Complexity is not only in the issues we seek to address, but in our own nature as a global network. GPPAC consists of hundreds of member organisations, each with varying backgrounds, focus and priorities. Membership is fluid to a degree, with members' interest and participation waxing and waning as priorities

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<sup>5</sup> Jenny Aulin & Goele Scheers (2012), "Measuring Progress in conflict prevention: GPPAC's adaptation of Outcome Mapping": <http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/om-ideas-5-measuring-progress-in-conflict-prevention-gppacs-adaptation-of-outcome-mapping>

shift. We seek to work at different levels, sometimes with the network as a whole, sometimes with subsections of it.

As a global network, we need to be dynamic and flexible in order to respond to these diverse challenges. We need to draw from our breadth of knowledge, to share our experiences and pursue multi-stakeholder engagement. To manage these complexities, we need a flexible framework that allows us to work in a fluid yet effective manner.

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## 3.2 KEY STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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The needs and priorities identified by our members on the ground take centre stage in determining our goals as a network. In the next five years, we will move towards a lighter framework for our activities. We will focus on three main strategic approaches: **enabling collaboration, improving practice and influencing policy**. We do not think of them as strictly separate from one another: They are interlocking, mutually reinforcing and oftentimes overlapping. This broad framework will give us the flexibility needed to work towards our overarching goal: achieving a shift from reaction to prevention in the way violent conflict is addressed.

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### 3.2.1. ENABLING COLLABORATION

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All societal conflicts are complex, with a great many actors who are party to them, who can influence them, or who hold key knowledge regarding them. In order to prevent armed conflicts, these actors must work together. Under our 'enabling collaboration' strategy, we seek to improve collaboration at several levels: within our own network, between civil society actors beyond our network, between civil society and (inter)governmental and non-state actors, and between (inter)governmental actors.

#### **Our goal**

By 2020, we will be a more dynamic, focused and effective network, with stronger capacities for action learning, knowledge generation and innovative, shared public outreach. This will enable collaboration amongst GPPAC members, civil society and other stakeholders to achieve good practices in effective, locally led conflict prevention initiatives. GPPAC will be a major convenor of the peacebuilding field, and an enabler of collaborative multi-stakeholder initiatives.

#### **What we will do**

We will continue to strengthen and empower our network and to develop our own capacities to be more effective and influential. Our members form the heart of our network, and their diverse wealth of experience and expertise remains key to strengthening all our capacities: We learn from each other and support each other in our work.

We will take a leading role in bringing together external stakeholders, and sustain our engagement with them. Engaging with different stakeholders in this way leads to meaningful collaboration and exchange. In doing so, we pool our learning, and grow our capacities to implement inclusive, locally informed conflict prevention strategies. Actors targeted through this strategy will include the extended GPPAC network, our partners in civil society, state and non-state actors, and representatives of regional and global intergovernmental organisations.

### How we will do it

- We will continue to strengthen and grow the GPPAC network, by increasing members' ownership of the network, strengthening coherence between our work at the local, regional and global levels, and approaching new members where gaps exist.
- We will collaborate through coalitions with other civil society organisations, networks and research institutions, and seek strategic partnerships with state institutions, regional organisations and UN bodies. Collaborative efforts can take all forms: from informal, ad-hoc to formal and longer-term projects. We will engage in joint conflict prevention and dialogue and mediation initiatives, linking actors at the local, regional and global levels.
- We will provide a platform to amplify the individual and collective voices of GPPAC to be heard in different public spheres.
- We want GPPAC to be known for the people who bring it to life. We are a network of organisations, but at our heart are the hundreds of individuals dedicated to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. We will broaden our liaison functions to appointing 'GPPAC ambassadors' - champions of the issues we work on, like peace education, dialogue & mediation, or gender, peace and security. These ambassadors will liaise with key stakeholders on their area of expertise and give a face to our work, to our products and a voice on key areas.
- We will use our network to provide space for dialogue when tensions between different groups arise and conflicts risk escalating, or have already led to violence. From track two dialogues and mediation processes, to establishing 'good offices' between civil society and relevant state institutions, or conducting solidarity missions to countries at risk.

### How we will measure progress (indicators)

- Annual assessments of regional and global networks.
- Level and description of collaboration with other organisations and actors.
- Number and frequency of joint activities and interventions, e.g. early warning alerts, local stories communicated widely, conflict analyses, policy briefs and recommendations produced by local CSOs, solidarity missions and statements.
- Number of formal and informal partnership agreements.

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## 3.2.2. IMPROVING PRACTICE

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We seek to improve conflict prevention and peacebuilding in two distinct areas:

- We work diverse and fast-developing fields, in which valuable knowledge and experience too often is not shared due to time and geographical constraints. We will improve both our own practices and those of others working in this field through knowledge exchange and action learning.
- While there are many promising policy commitments to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, they are often not translated into practice. We will hold (inter-)governmental actors to account on the policy promises they have made, and provide them with expert civil society advice on how they might do so.

### Our goal

By 2020, we will have greater accountability and mutual responsibility, within civil society as well as with other key stakeholders, improving our practices and ultimately contributing to establishing a culture of nonviolence and prevention.

## **What we will do**

We seek to continuously improve our own practices through action learning to generate knowledge and tools for conflict prevention. This is complemented by our enabling collaboration, described above. Our focus will be on issues identified by local GPPAC members that can benefit from the support of our regional and global network structures.

Improving practice will support our third area of work, influencing policy, which we explain below. We will improve our advocacy skills to take effective collective action, lobby for change, tell powerful stories and hold decision-makers to account. We will support model activities of our network members and quick responses to developing challenges.

We believe that political actors should also be held accountable for their actions: they must honour their commitments and work to increase their own capacities to operationalize and implement inclusive, locally informed conflict prevention strategies. We will use our knowledge products as advocacy tools, targeting key stakeholders in national and multilateral institutions, media and the corporate sector to improve their practices and to encourage better preventive action.

## **How we will do it**

- We will continue to invest in learning - both within our network, and together with other actors - to generate and document our collective knowledge on conflict prevention and peacebuilding in practice, and enabling us to tell our stories in powerful and effective ways. We will emphasise learning from our positive experiences while also maintaining space for critical reflection.
- We will create more knowledge products such as best practice guides and tools to support conflict prevention efforts, both inside and outside civil society.
- We will strengthen a civil society knowledge base on conflict prevention through learning initiatives such as horizontal learning exchanges - these will also support our efforts to enable collaboration.
- We will improve our own advocacy practices to strengthen our voice and the voices of our members, building our capacity to support our advocacy agenda.
- We will engage with multiple stakeholders, creating a community of prevention as a basis for knowledge exchange and improving practice.
- We will work with members to hold governments accountable for complying with the international norms and frameworks for conflict prevention that they are party to, and ensure that policies and peace processes are inclusive and political space for civil society provided.
- We will provide the relevant stakeholders in specific conflict situations with conflict analysis, insights and recommendations for action from GPPAC members and other local civil society actors
- We will promote conflict sensitivity in the corporate sector, media and donor practice.
- We will support the development and implementation of good practices and effective models in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field.

## **How we will measure progress (indicators)**

- Number and description of knowledge products produced and used (guides, manuals, tools, etc.).
- Level and description of increased information sharing and learning between members and possibly including other key organisations and actors.
- Number of CSO representatives (women/men) trained skills relating to strategising, lobby and advocacy, conflict analysis, gender analysis, dialogue & mediation, peace education, media.

- Number and description of trainings and learning exchanges conducted by CSOs.
- Number of CSO representatives (women/men) participating in learning initiatives.
- Descriptions of cases in which learning contributes to improving practices and to reaching results in conflict prevention.
- Description of civil society-led dialogue processes.
- Description of dialogue processes, including level of inclusivity.
- Number and direct / indirect results of collaborative peacebuilding initiatives, implemented with the network's support.

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### 3.2.3. INFLUENCING POLICIES

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Good policies on conflict prevention are a prerequisite for good practices. We distinguish three categories of policies that we seek to influence:

- *Norms and frameworks.* An example of a norm is the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP). Examples of frameworks are the post-2015 process on the Sustainable Development Goals, the UN1325 framework on women, peace and security, the UN Human Security Framework and humanitarian frameworks to respond to crises.
- *Institutionalisation and institutional engagement for conflict prevention,* including space for civil society. At the international level an example is the International Criminal Court and at the national level an example is Infrastructure for Peace.

*Operationalisation of conflict prevention and compliance.* At the regional level examples are the development early warning and early response mechanisms and engaging in mediation. At the national level an example is the compliance to resolution UN1325 through national action plans on women, peace and security.

#### **Our goal**

By 2020, national and international policies will be in place that establish, encourage and mainstream multi-stakeholder platforms for addressing and preventing violent conflict.

#### **What we will do**

While there are promising international norms, resolutions, laws and policies to prevent violence and end impunity, they and the political will to implement them can be greatly improved. We pursue these ends through building the capacity of our global networks of local and regional civil society organisations, and supporting and conducting joint lobby and advocacy at national, regional and global levels. This shift at the political level must be combined with a mutually reinforcing shift towards a culture of prevention at the societal level, where the greatest devastating impact of violent conflict is felt.

GPPAC promotes and advocates for inclusive policies for prevention. GPPAC itself promotes inclusiveness through involvement of member organisations and affected communities in political processes for conflict prevention policies. We want to lead by example and ensure that local voices, including marginalised groups, are heard, also in complex socio-political processes around conflicts and conflict prevention.

Inclusive policy processes are necessary at all levels of policymaking. At the local level, GPPAC members will advocate for peace processes and practices to be inclusive to all parties, and promote the settlement of disputes through peaceful means. At the global level, we will collect case studies and identify good practices under our 'Improving practices' strategy. Good practices and effective principles will be

promoted at all political levels and set examples of what conflict prevention policies can mean in reality. In this way we ensure policymaking is well-informed by local realities.

At the regional level we will advocate for space for civil society to engage with regional organisations, and for regional norms and frameworks for conflict prevention. Regional organisations can play a greater role in creating platforms for dialogue and mediate between conflicting parties. Regional organisations can also learn from other regions that have operationalised early warning and early response mechanisms and develop policies for developing own conflict prevention schemes.

At the global level we will ensure that voices from the ground are heard by bringing members and their stories to the fore. We advocate for maintaining and expanding existing norms and frameworks for conflict prevention, and promote their compliance.

### **How we will do it**

- We will analyse existing information and map the institutions in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as determine strategies to best influence the different actors.
- We will formulate clear recommendations for relevant actors and follow up at different levels in a collaborative manner.
- We will disseminate our messages to a wider audience making use of the most efficient channels and tools accessible to GPPAC.
- We will ensure that issues being discussed in regional and global policy arenas are informed by local knowledge and expertise. We will do this through locally-led advocacy initiatives, based on needs and priorities identified by our regional networks, always highlighting our human security approach.
- We will monitor where our strategic focus and resources can be most effective based on criteria focused on the intersection between members' needs and capacities, and the potential effectiveness of international collaboration conflict prevention policies and practices.
- We will collect and analyse good practices from member organisations from around the globe. We will draw lessons from these practices and formulate effective models that will be promoted at the different political levels and inform decision makers in order to influence policies accordingly.
- We will support membership-driven advocacy and develop the lobby and advocacy capacities of our member organisations and their partners, and enable them to better promote their and our points of view at the different political levels. Members will receive support from the regional and global networks and strengthen our messages in political arenas and through media. This will be done through an approach of 'learning by doing'.
- We will further develop our advocacy network of GPPAC liaisons to the UN and selected regional organisations. We will cooperate with other civil society organisations and civil society networks to increase access to political arenas. We will strengthen existing norms and frameworks through collaboration with like-minded civil society organisations and networks. This way of working creates an infrastructure for lobby and advocacy and enables network members' involvement into the political arenas.
- We will analyse emerging conflict situations through action alerts and follow up with lobby and advocacy and utilise existing peace building policies and urge for preventive action.
- We will collaborate with like-minded governments and relevant regional, international and global institutions to ensure access to the respective political arenas and increase political space for civil society, especially towards countries where our members face restrictions.

- We will involve GPPAC members in translation and operationalization of existing international norms and frameworks.
- We will promote the strengthening of existing UN resolutions, frameworks and conventions. Where applicable, we will provide expert input to new policies and comment draft resolutions, and ensure involvement of grassroots civil society and local voices are heard. We will follow up on the post-2015 framework, especially the operationalisation and financing of the goal on peace and security, and how the commitments could be translated to practice.

#### **How we will measure progress (indicators)**

- Qualitative analysis of reported strategic discussions and strategic plans.
- Number of policy recommendations resulting from dialogues adopted by policymakers.
- Number of CSO representatives (women/men) capacitated to conduct lobby and advocacy across more than one political arena beyond their local political space, including narrative descriptions of the overall effect of the efforts.
- Number of CSO representatives (women/men) participating in national, regional and global advocacy engagements, including narrative description of the overall effect of the efforts.
- Level and description of participation in policy discussion by groups affected by conflict.
- Number, description and results of civil society-led advocacy initiatives.
- Level and description of civil society participation (women/men) in peace processes / negotiations advocating inclusive practices.
- Description of gender sensitive policies adopted by policymakers.
- Description of social and news media engagements.

#### **Overall impact indicators**

- Number of states and inter-governmental institutions committing to adopting inclusive conflict prevention strategies, including narrative descriptions of GPPAC's contribution.
- Number and description of institutional relationships established between CSOs and regional organisations
- Description of accountability mechanisms developed for prevention
- Number and description of CSOs participating in designing and implementing national infrastructures for peace
- Number and description of women and men in leadership positions committing to strategies for ensuring inclusion of women in conflict prevention approaches

## 4 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES: DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUALITY

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Diversity and pluralism have inherent value, and differences can be a source of strength. Gender equality is a cornerstone for sustainable peace and justice, and a gender perspective enhances conflict prevention approaches. Therefore, GPPAC works to create inclusive, diverse and vibrant civil societies— emphasising the special needs and rights of vulnerable groups—through the promotion of respect and inclusiveness. We take action to increase equality of opportunity, of access to resources, and in decision making. We support those who experience political, economic and social marginalisation as they strive for empowerment. We do this by supporting the development of capacities at the individual and organisational level and through local and regional civic networks. Through capacity building, networks and participation, we aim to strengthen inclusive societal processes for democratisation and equality.

Women, men, youth and other groups are often depicted mainly as victims or perpetrators in conflict. GPPAC sees them as important agents in preventing conflict and building peace. Conflict interventions and peace processes have a far greater chance of success if they are inclusive of the many roles that people play as members of a peaceful society, regardless of how they identify in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, culture and other orientations. For the period 2016 to 2020 GPPAC will give strategic priority to greater cooperation in the network on Gender and Youth.

### 4.1 GENDER

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The adoption of GPPAC's Gender Policy in 2010 confirmed that we are a network committed to using gender responsive strategies in bringing about a transformative shift towards prevention. In our advocacy, we focus on the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security<sup>6</sup> (UNSCR 1325), and related resolutions. We place strong emphasis on the need to recognise, highlight and involve women through their active roles in conflict prevention efforts, as part of any holistic engagement towards sustainable peace. We also call for a broader gender, peace and security perspective to be applied to the implementation of UNSCR 1325, including engaging with masculinities.

For GPPAC the challenge for the future is to step up commitments to women's leadership and to find a balance between gender mainstreaming and maintaining and supporting women's spaces.

For 2016 to 2020 the focus of GPPAC's advocacy will be the application of UNSCR 1325 in practice. While participation and prevention continue to be at the core of GPPAC's messages on gender, we need to be more strategic in how we apply gender to different themes, most importantly to UNSCR 1325, and make it

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<sup>6</sup> The resolution on women, peace and security acknowledges the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls. It calls for the adoption of a gender perspective to consider the special needs of women and girls during conflict, repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction

more applicable for the network. The adoption of UNSCR 2122<sup>7</sup> and the CEDAW General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations<sup>8</sup> opens up new linkages for our continued advocacy and application of UNSCR 1325 and creating a broader understanding of this within our network. In order to leverage this, we need to create and sustain a broader understanding of the linkages between GPPAC's work and the principles of UNSCR 1325 in practice.

Concerning the development of capacities, we have identified the need to concentrate on the participation of women in peacebuilding, mediation and negotiation. Trainings should focus on: (a) women involved in mediation/negotiation processes; and (b) other actors and especially training institutions being trained together with women on gender-sensitive practice and processes.

The GPPAC Gender Strategy 2016 – 2020 will address the following key areas:

- Communication & Visibility of GPPAC and the Gender Focal Points, and building up targeted/issue-based information sharing. This includes relevant links to the Post-2015 Development Agenda from a gender, peace & security angle, not as a separate but integrated issue.
- Resourcing for Women Peace Security (including financial and technical capacities)
- Gender Peace and Security: keep engaging in the broader discussion around the issue (including issues of patriarchy, gender mainstreaming) from a prevention angle
- Reflection of coalition building on: (a) Engendering Peace and Security; and (b) Bringing Peace and Security into gender/feminist group advocacy
- A clearly defined target group of actors, and key documents used for advocacy.

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## 4.2 YOUTH

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Almost half of the world's population is under the age of 24, and more than one billion of them are aged between 15 and 24. This "youth bulge" is predominantly found in regions with governance deficits, low development and employment opportunities, and high levels of societal violence.

Young people are among both the most important victims of conflict, ranging from being physically and sexually harmed; traumatised; and deprived of basic human needs, to missing education and other opportunities. They are also among the most important perpetrators of violence, both as part of state armed forces, and of non-state armed groups including rebel groups, gangs and organised crime. The absence of meaningful opportunities for young people is generally seen as a very important driver of conflict in many societies.

However, young people are also important change agents, supporting the values of non-violence and peaceful change as seen in movements for democratisation and good governance around the world. They are in particular identified with the information and communications revolution, expanding their

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 2122 reaffirms the Council's commitment to combating sexual violence in armed conflict and the full implementation of resolution 1325 and other resolutions on women, peace and security.

<sup>8</sup> Recommendation 30 of the Council on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

capacities for social mobilisation. Young people are in the formative stage of their lives, and engaging with them is a long term investment, not least considering their possible future leadership roles.

While GPPAC has long recognised the importance of youth, both in the positive and the negative sense, to the prevention of armed conflict, lack of capacity has meant that so far there has not been a coherent approach within the network, with the exception of our work on peace education, which has focused on school-age children. We aim to change this in the 2016-2020 period. We will do so by building on existing capacities, work and connections: Many GPPAC members and regional networks engage in activities involving or targeting young people, and some youth organisations and networks are part of or have links with GPPAC.

Initially, the focus of GPPAC's strategy relating to youth will be internal:

- We will map the existing initiatives relating to youth and the youth organisations within the network, collecting best practices and consulting with youth members to:
- Develop a youth policy and implementation plan, aiming to ensure that youth organisations are actively involved at all levels within GPPAC;
- Ensure that youth perspectives are taken into account in GPPAC's activities, building awareness within the network of how our work involves and impacts on youth;
- Build capacity within the network by developing resources on preventing young people from turning to violence.
- Building on this, we will start taking a more concerted approach to external youth advocacy, focusing on
- Ensuring young people having a voice in peace processes;
- Recognition of the role young people can play in conflict prevention and peacebuilding; and
- Emphasising the importance of education and employment opportunities for young people in preventing violence.
- Support the development and implementation of good peace education practices